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SIPDIS

AID ADMINISTRATOR FORE FROM AMBASSADOR BRADTKE  
AA/ENE FOR DOUG MENARCHIK  
AID/ENE FOR VALERIE CHEN  
EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF AID ADMINISTRATOR FORE TO CROATIA

¶1. I am delighted that you will be coming to Zagreb to mark the closing of our AID Mission here after nearly 16 years. During that period, with our assistance and the help of the international community, Croatia has made remarkable progress. Croatia has resisted the temptation of nationalist and authoritarian politics, rebuilt its war devastated economy and infrastructure, and supported the return of tens of thousands of refugees. In less than a decade, Croatia has gone being a country with UN peacekeeping troops on its territory to becoming a country that contributes to over a dozen UN peacekeeping missions and has two hundred soldiers serving in ISAF in Afghanistan. In sum, Croatia has become a transformational success story.

¶2. President Bush's highly successful visit here only six weeks ago recognized the progress Croatia has made and celebrated the invitation Croatia received at the NATO Summit in Bucharest to join the Alliance. The President's speech to the Croatian people in St. Mark's Square, the highlight of his visit, was warmly welcomed, and U.S.- Croatian relations are at perhaps their highest point since independence. There are no major bilateral problems on our agenda, and we are now working on the two issues where the Croatsians requested the President's help: increasing trade and investment and trying to see whether we can begin the process of bringing Croatia into the visa waiver program.

¶3. The President's visit here also signaled a change in the nature of our relations. Rather than being the object of our attention and the recipient of our assistance, Croatia is becoming a partner in dealing with problems in Southeastern Europe, an example of reform for other countries, and an ally in meeting challenges elsewhere in the world. In addition to membership in NATO, Croatia's seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council over the next two years will provide new opportunities for partnership and cooperation.

¶4. In that context, I hope you will use your visit to deliver several messages to the Croatsians:

-- First, you can remind your Croatian interlocutors of what we achieved together. Among other accomplishments, the effective use of our assistance has enabled Croatia to develop a flourishing NGO sector, to create jobs and improve living conditions in war-affected areas, to encourage the start up of small and medium sized enterprises, and to strengthen rule of law and local government.

-- At the same time, however, these achievements do not mean that the hard work of reform is over. Croatia now needs to put its efforts on a self-sustaining basis, using its own human and financial resources, as well as the considerable assistance it will continue receive in the run-up to EU

membership.

-- Finally, the end of AID's presence does not mean a lessening of U.S. interest or engagement. Rather, it signifies a maturing in our relations. In forums such as NATO's North Atlantic Council, we will deal with each other as equals and partners.

15. In your luncheon remarks to the American Chamber and its Croatian partners, you will also have an important opportunity to encourage closer cooperation between business and government and to promote the development of public-private partnerships. Although your schedule will no longer permit you to visit Varazdin, that city is perhaps the best example in Croatia of how forward-thinking local and regional government officials have created an atmosphere in which cooperation between business and government can flourish and benefit the local community. The Microsoft Business Technology Center, which we helped to establish, is precisely the kind of joint project that can help Croatia prepare to compete in the globalized economy of the 21st century.

16. Since I will be filling in for you in Varazdin I will not be on hand for your arrival. You will be in the capable hands of my DCM Vivian Walker and our Acting Mission Director Rebecca Latorraca until I join you at the AmCham lunch. I look forward to your visit and marking the end of this successful chapter in U.S.-Croatian relations.  
Bradtke